

Methods: Sampling, Data Collection and Analysis

The study population consisted of 8,000 individuals owning a minimum of five acres in the southwest DEZ (see Appendix A for map). A random selection of 1,000 landowners was drawn from this landowner data base. Data were obtained through the use of a mailed questionnaire.

The Questionnaire

A 22-page questionnaire was developed in consultation with personnel from the Wisconsin DNR Bureaus of Wildlife Management, Customer Service and Licensing, and Integrated Science Services; the University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of Wildlife Ecology, and the Human Dimensions of Natural Resources Unit at Colorado State University (HDU-CSU). The resulting questionnaire was pre-tested in focus groups with landowners in the southwest DEZ, revised, and peer reviewed by social scientists at HDU-CSU.

Implementation

Standard mailed questionnaire techniques were used to conduct this survey. Each landowner was contacted a maximum of four times. These contacts include an initial questionnaire with a cover letter signed by Wisconsin DNR Secretary Scott Hassett with a first-class hand-stamped addressed return envelope (known as the full mailing); a postcard which served as a “thank you” for returning the questionnaire or as a reminder to please complete and return it; a second full mailing sent to all non-respondents; and a final third full mailing sent to non-respondents. Mailings were sent between October 1, 2004 and November 12, 2004.

The response rate of the landowners is based on a formula that divides the number of returned questionnaires by the total number of mailings, minus the number of cases determined to be a “non-sample.” For this study a non-sample is defined as selected respondents who are deceased; mailings undelivered with no forwarding address given; or people who said they were not landowners. From the sample of 1,000 landowners, 40 were eliminated (26 were due to

an incorrect address without forwarding information and 14 were determined to be deceased or no longer a landowner). Useable questionnaires were returned by 613 landowners for a response rate of 64 percent.

The University of Wisconsin Survey Center (UWSC) conducted the clerical tasks associated with this survey. The UWSC assembled the mailings, tracked the response rate, and performed the necessary data entry. All mailings originated from and were returned to the UWSC.

The Wisconsin DNR Bureau of Integrated Science Services conducted all analyses using SPSS-PC version 13.0. The margin of error for the study is ± 3 percent.

Non-Response Check

To explore potential non-response bias, respondents who returned completed questionnaires were compared to those who did not return a questionnaire. A random selection of 53 non-respondents were telephoned in January 2005 and asked a subset of questions from the mail survey. A statistical comparison of responses found minimal or no differences between the mail survey respondents and non-respondents. As a result, based on the telephone non-response check, non-response bias was not considered to be a problem and data were not weighted.

Additional Data

Direct quotations from three focus groups are found integrated throughout this report. The quotations appear in *italics* and have been inserted to add context to some of the thinking that underlies the survey responses. The focus groups were conducted in May and June 2004. Participants included landowners known to support the Wisconsin DNR’s CWD control initiatives, landowners that oppose the Wisconsin DNR’s CWD initiatives, and landowners that support some but oppose other Wisconsin DNR CWD initiatives. Participants were identified and contacted by Wisconsin DNR field personnel and CWD liaisons.